

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
WALTER REED BRAC INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY – March 19, 2013**

- Ilaya Hopkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- Updates from Phil Alperson, Montgomery County BRAC Coordinator:
 - Phil noted that every item discussed at the BIC meetings has loads of background material on the web site, listed under today's meeting on the "Get Involved" Page:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/brac/getinvolved.asp>
 - Phil said that at every BIC meeting he reminds everyone that the "Get Involved" Page's chronological report of BIC meetings includes the following resource materials:
 - **Printable Timeline: Anticipated Construction-Related Traffic Disruptions in Bethesda (as of 1-15-13):**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/disruptionstimeline-041111.pdf>
 - **Summary of BRAC Transportation Projects and Commuting Options:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/projects_glance.asp
 - Phil reminded the Committee to get traffic and BRAC news and information first by following Montgomery County BRAC on Twitter **@BracMoCoMD**.
 - Phil announced that MCDOT will hold an information session for construction contractors that may be interested in bidding on the **MD 355 Rockville Pike Multimodal Crossing Project**. The session will be April 19th, 2013, in the MCDOT engineering offices at Edison Park in Gaithersburg. The public is welcome to attend, but this is not a public forum and is intended specifically to discuss technical information with contractors. MCDOT will publish a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) for the project in the near future.
- **NAVY: Jeff Miller announced that he has accepted another position in the federal government and has left NSAB.** Jeff's responsibilities will be absorbed by personnel at NSAB. Joe Macri will be the public's principle point of contact, Ron Emery will be responsible for NSAB transportation programs, and Ron Ewart of NAVFAC will be the main liaison for the off-campus transportation projects. Members of the BIC wished Jeff well and thanked him for many years of service to the community.

- **State Highway Administration Presentations – “Phase 4” of the Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane Intersection Improvement Project:**
 - **Matt Snare provided an updated Traffic Analysis for the Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane intersection improvement project. Matt’s Traffic Analysis presentation is posted on the BRAC web site with this summary and can be seen at:** http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/locusthill-phase4-sha_trafficanalysis-bic-031913.pdf
 - This has been discussed at the BIC several times in relation to the proposed Phase 4. This project would extend a new northbound lane currently being built from North Wood Road to Cedar Lane, extending it north of Cedar Lane to a point near Locust Hill Road where it would merge into the existing lanes of Rockville Pike. SHA believes traffic counts conducted after the September 2011 completion of BRAC relocation to Bethesda underestimate BRAC’s impact on congestion because high levels of congestion actually prevent vehicles from moving through the intersection. Presently, Level of Services (LOS) at the intersection is Failing, or LOS F. The Phase 1-3 projects that are underway will improve that to LOS E. Adding Phase 4 would improve it to LOS D.
 - Locust Hill residents maintain that the merge lane will create hazardous conditions vehicles traveling northbound as well; as for vehicles entering or exiting Locust Hill Avenue at Rockville Pike. In addition, adding the merge lane would exacerbate negative environmental impacts on the adjacent neighborhood. At the request of the Locust Hill community, SHA examined widening Rockville Pike further south of North Wood but found no merit to that plan.
 - **Locust Hill’s response to SHA’s Traffic Analysis Update is posted on the BRAC web site with this meeting summary:** http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/locusthill-phase4-lcha_responsetosha_010913analysis-031413.pdf
 - An unresolved matter is whether the so-called interim traffic signal at North Wood will remain and, if so, what its ultimate hours of operation would be. SHA studied a “hybrid” plan which would retain the signal while constructing Phase 4. SHA found that maintaining the signal would not improve traffic flow at the Cedar Lane intersection due to flawed geometrics, so the question continues to be whether Phase 4 offers enough benefit to justify the cost of construction.

- **Caryn Brookman discussed the NEPA study currently under way for the Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane intersection improvement project. Many in attendance were concerned that they were not aware of the environmental study and had not seen the detailed report. The Noise Analysis is now posted on the BRAC web site with this summary at:**
http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/locusthill-phase4-sha_noiseanalysis-bic-031913.pdf
 - The National Environmental Policy Act requires an environmental analysis for transportation projects using federal funds. The current study is focusing on the project's impact on air quality and noise. Along with the new merge lane north of Cedar Lane, the project would include a new high wall between Rockville Pike and the northbound Access Road on which eleven homes are located. SHA believes that the project will keep noise and air quality within acceptable levels although some testing devices raised some concern. Nearby residents disputed those claims and said that current noise levels, even without Phase 4, are unacceptable. Residents also questioned SHA's testing strategy, noting that traffic during the peak hours – when much of the testing took place – is actually quieter because it doesn't move quickly, but traffic is much noisier during off-peak hours because it moves more quickly, and it is much louder moving uphill when engines work harder.
- **Larry Cole of the County's Planning Department within MNCPPC led a discussion of the Planning Department's staff recommended Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan for a dedicated Bus Rapid Transit system. Technical difficulties prevented the Committee from viewing his PowerPoint, but it is now posted on the BRAC web site with this summary:**
http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/brt-mncppc_corridorsfunctionalmasterplan-bic-031813.pdf
 - For the BIC, the main item of interest is that the MD 355 (Rockville Pike) corridor is considered to have the highest ridership potential and can be implemented without the cost of acquiring new Right of Way (ROW). The staff recommends "repurposing" two existing traffic lanes of MD 355 to be dedicated to Rapid Transit. The transit lanes would run from the DC border at Friendship Heights to Milestone in Germantown where it would meet the planned Corridor Cities Transitway.
 - While some on the Committee questioned the logic of taking away traffic lanes in the highly congested Medical Center area, Larry noted that many cars would be replaced by the high occupancy RTVs, and studies have shown that repurposing actually improves traffic flow. Larry added that the Planning Board did not accept the staff recommendations as currently written, so public hearings which were expected to be in early May would be postponed a few weeks.

- **Freda Mitchem introduced herself as the new representative for the Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association, replacing Ken Strickland.**
- **The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. and a cake was served to honor Jeff Miller's service to the Committee and the people of Montgomery County.**
- **The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 18, 2013, 7:00 p.m. (NOTE this is the new regular starting time), at the BCC Regional Services Center.**

Committee members in attendance, March 19, 2013:

Nancy Abeles, Bethesda Crest Home Owners Association
 Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator
 Christopher Bishop, State Highway Administration
 Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
 Ilaya Hopkins, Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board, East Bethesda Citizens Association, and Chair, Walter Reed BRAC Integration Committee
 Ginanne Italiano, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
 Ed Krauze, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association
 Karen Kuker-Kihl, The Promenade
 Richard Levine, Locust Hill Citizens Association
 Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont
 Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association
 Freda Mitchem, Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association
 Phil Neuberg, National Institutes of Health
 Patrick O'Neil, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
 Rich Vogel, Stone Ridge School
 Leslie Weber, Suburban Hospital

Ex-officio:

Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)
 Cindy Gibson (Council Member Roger Berliner)
 Debbie Spielberg (Council Member Marc Elrich)
 Capt. Fritz Kass, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
 Jeff Miller, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
 Joseph Macri, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
 Ron Ewart, NAVFAC, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda

Other Attendees

Oya and Ralph Bain, Locust Hill Citizens Association
 Agnes Blum, The Gazette
 Tom Bridle
 Dawn Chaikin, Locust Hill Citizens Association
 Cherian Eapen
 Sean Egan, MDOT
 Carl Gentilcore, Locust Hill Citizens Association

Elizabeth Keys, Locust Hill Citizens Association
Mrs. B. Keys, Locust Hill Citizens Association
Aaron Kraut, Bethesda Now.com
Jeanette Musil, DOD Office of Economic Adjustment
Tom Robertson, Bethesda Urban Partnership
William Sadlon, NAVFAC Washington
Daniel Schebler, DOD Office of Economic Adjustment
Paul Seder, Whitley Park
Barb Solberg, MD State Highway Administration
Daniel Willard, Locust Hill Citizens Association
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